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## VOLUNTEER

# SPOTLIGHT

## MEET EVELYN DARCY

Evelyn has been a CASA volunteer for two and a half years. During that time, she has advocated for two families, serving eight children.

Besides her CASA work, Evelyn loves reading a good book, finding a coffee shop with a proper cappuccino, or exploring a new nature trail. She has a degree in music and forensic psychology. Evelyn teaches music and conducts domestic violence research. Right now, she is enjoying time with her newborn baby.

Lucas County CASA is blessed to have Evelyn on our team. Here is what she told us about her volunteer work.

### How has being a CASA volunteer impacted your life?

Being a CASA volunteer has challenged and grown my ability to care for others. I am so much more invested in helping upcoming generations have a beautiful future despite the ugliness of abuse.

### In your time as a CASA Volunteer, has there been an experience that has impacted you the most?

My CASA Kid had just been relocated to a very volatile and horrible placement a couple of hours away from Toledo. I was informed that the new placement did not work out and my CASA kid was going to be dropped off back in Toledo. I was on the phone for over three hours with Lucas County Children Services (LCCS), CASA staff members and attorneys, and possible placements. Thankfully, when my CASA kid got to downtown Toledo, we had forewarned LCCS just long enough to have housing ready for the

evening. I had been having difficulty working with this CASA kid because of the child's distrust of the system and trauma, but that night forever changed our relationship for the better. These children go through so much trauma. I was incredibly thankful that I was placed in a position to help that evening. It was also another reminder of how much I take for granted-- I never have had to stuff a garbage bag of belongings-- worrying about finishing my homework while also worrying about being kicked out in the snow. Their lives deserve to be touched by love.

### Which three qualities or skills should a prospective CASA volunteer possess?

Persistence, patience and humility. Volunteers need to have the strength to fiercely advocate while also possessing the strength to continually self reflect biases and beliefs that may hinder their CASA work.

### How did you collaborate and coordinate your investigation efforts with the other professionals on your case?

Working with others can be difficult and CASA work is no exception even though everyone may want the best for these children. Clear, respectful, and persistent communication with all parties was key to helping on my case.



### In your opinion, why is it essential for children who are victims of child abuse and neglect to have a CASA Volunteer?

A CASA volunteer allows a child someone who may connect the dots better than others working on the case. We are the "eyes and ears of the court". CASA volunteers often have more time to investigate case details and develop relationships between parties. I believe any CASA volunteer would say a case often brings with it unexpected, complex situations. Victims of abuse benefit from having a personal touch in challenging court situations.

### If you were speaking with an individual who is considering becoming a CASA Volunteer, what would you tell them?

I would say that while this may be one of the hardest volunteer positions, it is also one of the most rewarding. Abused children need love and advocacy as much (or more than) anyone else. They need to see a better side of human nature to break the cycles of abuse and neglect.